

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 4888

E.O. 11652 ADS DECLAS APR 15 1976

TAGS: MPOL, JA

SUBJECT: TRENDS IN DEFENSE PLANNING

REF: TOKYO 4245 APR 75

SUMMARY: JDA DIRECTOR GENERAL SAKATA HAS ORDERED THE PREPARATION OF A DRAFT FOR A POST-4TH DEFENSE BUILDUP PLAN IN WHICH EMPHASIS IS SUPPOSED TO SHIFT FROM QUANTITATIVE EXPANSION TO QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENT IN THE SDF. HE ALSO ANNOUNCED HIS DESIRE TO REVITALIZE THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL AND HAS FORMED A PRIVATE DEFENSE ADVISORY GROUP -- BOTH MOVES INTENDED TO PROMOTE PUBLIC INTEREST AND SUPPORT FOR DEFENSE POLICY PLANNING AND TO STRENGTHEN CIVILIAN CONTROL OVER DEFENSE MATTERS. END SUMMARY.

1. (U) ON 1 PARIL, JDA DIRECTOR GENERAL SAKATA INSTRUCTED THE JDA'S JOINT STAFF COUNCIL TO BEGIN WORK ON A NEW DEFENSE PLAN TO FOLLOW THE 4TH FIVE YEAR DEFENSE BUILDUP PLAN (FISCAL 1972-6). IN DESCRIBING THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS NEW PLAN, SAKATA EMPHASIZED THE FOLLOWING POINTS: RESTRICTIONS ON INCREASES IN PERSONNEL; IMPROVEMENTS IN JOINT PLANNING AND OPERATIONS AMONG THE SDF SERVICES; CONFIDENTIAL

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF REAR-AREA SUPPORT VS. FRONT-LINE

FIREPOWER, MODERNIZATION AND REPLACEMENT OF EQUIPMENT WITH STRESS ON COST-EFFECTIVENESS, IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES (E.G. DISASTER RELIEF).

2. (U) THE PRESS HAS DESCRIBED THE PREPARATION OF THIS NEW PLAN AS A QUOTE TURNING POINT UNQUOTE IN THE COURSE OF JAPAN'S DEFENSE FORCES. CONSCIOUS OF THE EFFECT THAT JAPAN'S SPIRALLING INFLATION HAS ALREADY HAD ON THE FOURTH DEFENSE PLAN, SAKATA EVIDENTLY FEELS THAT BOTH REDUCED ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THE CONTINUING LACK OF CONSENSUS ON THE NEED FOR AN EXPANDED MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT NECESSITATE A REASSESSMENT OF JAPAN'S DEFENSE POLICY -- C PARTICULAR, A SHIFT AWAY FROM THE JDA'S PHILOSOPHY OF QUANTITATIVE BUILDUP.

3. (C) AS OF NOW, SAKATA'S INSTRUCTIONS ARE LIMITED TO AN OUTLINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION (LITTLE PROSPECT OF IMMINENT WAR, BUT CONTINUED NEED FOR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES IN EMERGENCIES) AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVES FOR WORKING ON A DRAFT PLAN. RATHER THAN A FIFTH DEFENSE PLAN AS SUCH, SAKATA REPORTEDLY IS INCLINED TOWARDS AN ANNUAL QUOTE ROLLING BUDGET UNQUOTE WITH LONGER RANGE GOALS SET STRICTLY FOR INTERNAL PLANNING PURPOSES. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE DIRECTOR GENERAL IS BEGINNING TO FULFILL THE GOAL OF IMPROVING JOINT PLANNING BY PLACING INCREASED RELIANCE ON THE JOINT STAFF COUNCIL RATHER THAN THE INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STAFFS FOR BASIC DRAFTING WORK. HIS CONCERNS HERE ALSO EXTEND TO JOINT PLANNING WITH THE USG, THUS HIS INVITATION TO SECDEF (REFTEL).

4. (U) AT THE SAME TIME, SAKATA HAS CALLED FOR A REVIVAL OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL. ESTABLISHED AS A CONSULTATIVE BODY FOR THE CABINET UNDER THE DEFENSE AGENCY ESTABLISHMENT LAW, THE COUNCIL HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS LITTLE MORE THAN A RUBBER STAMP FOR APPROVING THE FOUR DEFENSE PLANS. THE DIRECTOR GENERAL NOW WANTS TO STRENGTHEN THE COUNCIL'S ROLE IN COORDINATING DEFENSE POLICY AND THUS QUOTE ENSURE COMPLETE CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE JDA UNQUOTE. ALSO, SAKATA HAS ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF A PRIVATE CONSULTATIVE ORGAN CALLED THE QUOTE GROUP TO CONFIDENTIAL

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CONSIDER DEFENSE UNQUOTE. MADE UP OF RETIRED POLITICIANS AND BUREAUCRATS, AS WELL AS BUSINESS LEADERS, ACADEMICS, AND CRITICS, THIS GROUP IS INTENDED TO PROMOTE PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE FORMATION OF DEFENSE POLICY.

5. (U) PRESS REACTION TO SAKATA'S ANNOUNCEMENTS HAVE GENERALLY TAKEN A WAIT AND SEE POSTURE. THERE HAS BEEN SKEPTICISM OVER WHETHER THE DIRECTOR GENERAL CAN SUB-

STANTIALY ACCOMPLISH HAS GOALS. ALSO, THERE ARE REPORTS OF POSSIBLE DISAGREEMENTS OVER THE CORTAILMENT OF QUANTITATIVE GROWTH ON THE PART OF LDP HAWKS AND THE UNIFORMED SERVICWS -- PARTICULARLY TH MSDF, THE SERVICE HARDEST HIT BY FOURTH DEFENSE PLAN CUT-BACKS.

6. (C) COMMENT: THOUGH A COMPLETE AMATURE IN THE AREA OF DEFENSE MATTERS, SAKATA HAS ALREADY GAINED A REPUTATION AN AN OUTSTANDING SUPPORTER AND SPOKESMAN FOR THE JDA. AGENCY OFFICIALS SEEM TO FEEL THAT HE IS AT LEAST AS CONCERNED WITH JDA'S INTERESTS AS HE IS WITH HIS OWN POLITICAL CAREER -- A NOTABLE DEPARTURE FROM SOME OF HIS PREDECESSORS. THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S RECENT ANNOUNCEMENTS HABEBROUGHT IDEAS THAT HAVE CIRCULATED AMONG JDA OFFICIALS FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS TO THE FOREFRONT. IT APPEARS THAT SAKATA'S OWN NTEREST IN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS AS WELL AS THE FFECTS OF DETENTE AND FINANCES HAVE NOW PROMPTED A CHANGE FROM QUANTITATIVE TO QUALITITAVE IMPROVEMENT IN THE SDF. HIS ATTENTION TO CONTROL OF A MILITARY ORGANIZATION THAT MAY ALREADY BE UNSURPASSED IN ITS DEGREE OF SUPORDINATION TO CIVILIAN AUTHORITY MIGHT SEEM SUPRORISING, BUTPERHAPS IT INDICATES THE CONTINUING CONCERN OF A WEAKENNG LDP TOWARD MANAGEMENT OF THE SENSITIVE AND HIGHLY EXPLOITABLE ISSUE OF DEFENSE. IT MAY ALSO REFLECT A DESIRE ON SAKATA'S PART TO IMPROVE TH QUALITY AS MUCH AS THE DEGREE OFCIVILIAN CONTROL; THAT IS, TH TREATMENT OF DEFENSE POLICY IN A MORE WIDELY RPRESENTATIVE AND RESPONSIBLE MANNER. EVEN IF WRITTEN OFF AS WINDOW DRESSING BY SKEPITICAL COMMENTATORS,HIS PLANS FOR THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL AND THE GROUP TO CONSIDER DEFENSE ARE A LOGICAL STEP IN THE DIRECTION.

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